No. 1. An Exhortation to the Sacrament.

Luke 14th Ch. Verse 18th.

They all with one consent began to make excuse.

In the parable from which these words are taken, the dispensation of the Gospel, offered to the Jews, is aptly represented under the similitude of an entertainment, to partake of which, chosen guests were invited, and when it was prepared, and their company expected, they sent in their several excuses.—At the time they should have attended, they were employed in very different pursuits.—In consequence of their refusal, those were bidden who were more likely to embrace the offer—"the poor, the maimed, the halt, "and the blind."—Because the Jews, to whom the blessings of the Gospel were first tendered, thought "themselves unworthy of everlasting life"—lo! says the author of the apostolic acts, "we turn to the Gentiles" —signifying that the Gentiles—all the other nations upon earth—should be admitted to a participation of them.

12

And great indeed are the blessings of that Gospel our blessed Redeemer came into the world to promulge! Great indeed are the blessings offered to all who are oppressed with the burthen of sin, and terrified with the apprehension of punishment!—And tho' the Gospel alone can remove the load, and avert the apprehension—how many totally reject it! how many refuse taking its easy yoke upon themselves! The design of this discourse is to shew the nature and end of the most distinguishing Ordinance of the Gospel—the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper—inferring from thence the indispensible obligation, all, who embrace Christianity, are under to a frequent participation of it—to expose the weakness and insufficiency of some of the excuses offered for a neglect of it—and in conclusion, earnestly to exhort you "all—" with one consent—to eat of that bread & drink of that Cup"—the Cup of the new Covenant, which is the Blood of "Christ shed for the remission of our sins."—

And no subject surely can more usefully engage our attention, especially previous to the administration of the Sacrament, when it is considered that of the great num-

bers who regularly attend the Church, so few in comparison commemorate the Death of their Redeemer.— When such men have their excuses removed, if they still continue deaf to the invitation, let them consider, when they stand under the arrest of Death, what comfort they can give themselves—what consolation they can receive from others: with Joseph's brethren they will say "we "are verily guilty concerning this thing" 'in that it was intended for our benefit, and tho' we were convinced of its necessity, & conjured to receive it in order to "our "Souls' health," we have deferred it so long, that if we receive it not, we perish, and if we now receive it, "we are guilty, perhaps, of the Body and Blood of "Christ our Saviour."

The primary design of the institution was "the "continual remembrance of the Death & Passion of "our Saviour Jesus Christ—Do this," says he, "in "remembrance of me".—Lest we should be so strangely inconsiderate as to forget the inestimable Blessings derived from his Sufferings & Death, this Rite, He, in his wisdom, instituted, to render them the objects of

And what could be better adapted to promote this pious design?—When we see the Bread broken & the Wine powred out, we behold by faith the Body of our blessed Redeemer hung, pierced, and nailed for our sakes to the Cross; his Blood shed for the "washing, "sanctifying, saving, all, who draw near with faith, "and are meet partakers of those holy mysteries."

(2dly) We are to frequent the holy Sacrament—not merely to call to mind our Saviour's Death and Passion—but to apply the benefits of them to ourselves.—We, who profess to be Christians, are, in commemoration of our privilege, to assemble together all adorned with the same dress, the righteousness of our Redeemer—all endowed with the same temper, the meekness of the Gospel—all supplicating the same blessing—the Salvation of our Souls.—This blessing the Atonement of our Saviour has procured, and the Sacrament is a principal channel thro which it is conveyed.—If, my Brethren, this is the path in which we are to walk—if this be the gate through which we are to pass, what obligations, do we think, we are under, out of gratitude to our Saviour—

out of regard to ourselves, to accept his invitation, and thereby make his Merits, ours? An obligation of such a nature, so universally binding, so clearly indispensible, that, I hope in God, no one who now hears me, will, upon any pretence whatever, refuse to comply with it.

(3dly) Another reason why we should celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper is, that during our progress thro' life we shall receive the assistance of God's holy Spirit; and this reason surely deserves our most serious attention—If after what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for us, our salvation is still, if we might dare to say it, incomplete; if it be necessary that the third person of the ever-blessed Trinity should be employed on the same errand—not merely at the first promulgation of the Gospel—but to the "very end of the world," how much does it behove us to invoke his assistance, and to obtain it by whatever means are proposed to us?—We must be lost indeed to all sense of happiness, we must be totally unconcerned about what will become of us hereafter, if when God offers us his assistance we reject it "and will none "of his comforts."—A fourth reason why we should ce-

lebrate the Lord's-Supper is the positive command of our bleſsed Saviour—" Do this in remembrance of me.—This " do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me."— This He commanded the night in which he suffered; a few hours only before He submitted " for us men & for " our salvation" to be hung upon the croſs.—Were a dying friend—one who was going to lie down his life for our sake—strictly to enjoin us, in remembrance of what he was about to do for us, to comply with such or such an injunction; and that we might not be tempted to forget it—to consider it as his dying request—as the token of his kindneſs, and the expreſsion of our gratitude—could we be so baſe, so unnatural as to diſregard, as absolutely to refuſe to comply with such injunction? And yet so ſcandalously ungrateful are thoſe who abſent themſelves from the Lord's Table. One thing yet is to be taken into the account—you are to anſwer for this unaccountable neglect —this monstrous ingratitude—before the throne of God.

The excuſes men offer in their juſtification I now proceed to remove.—

The first excuse men usually offer is, that they are so engaged with the business and employed in the cares of life, they really have not time to prepare themselves, as they would wish, for this most solemn Ordinance.—A very plausible, specious excuse it is.—But what? The seventh day is their own—on that day they can attend the Church—they can devote some part of it to reading the scriptures—and they can every evening at least, of their lives—spare a few minutes to thank God, with their families—for all his blessings.—They can refrain from swearing, drinking, and every other excess.—They can keep a "conscience void of offence towards their neighbour," by paying what is strictly due, by demanding and receiving no more, than what, in justice, they ought.—Will the observance of this encroach upon your time?—will this prevent you from making a necessary provision for yourselves and for your families? You are convinced it will not—the conscience of every one tells him it will not. Let your conscience then be obeyed.—The excuse is removed.—Convince the world—and what is of more consequence—convince yourselves—that Religion is of too

venerable a presence to admit either insult or neglect.—Let neither "the buying a piece of ground, the proving a "yoke of oxen—nor the marrying a wife"—in other words—let no worldly business whatever hinder your attendance at the Altar of the Lord.—"For how will you "escape, if you neglect so great" a mean of "Salvation"?

Another excuse with many is, that they are so engaged in a course of sin, and have so exceedingly provoked the Almighty they are afraid to commemorate that great sacrifice offered for their sins.—And such are all those, who live, in every respect, as tho' they had neither a God to worship, nor a soul to save—who spend days, weeks, months, & years, it may be—without ever retiring to their closet to thank God "for their Creation, Preservation, "and Redemption."—Well may such men say they are afraid of receiving the Sacrament! But who, in his senses, would continue to run that race of vice—which renders him liable to the just judgment of God? If you are indeed such sinners, "sin no more."—"Wash ye, "make you clean:" appear at the Altar with a real contrition for your sins past—and an hearty resolution,

fervent desire, to please God for the time to come—God will approve, accept, confirm your resolution—He will convey his Grace in the holy Sacrament to enable you to keep it:—with your change of life you will perceive a change of disposition; however small it may be at first—however exposed to the chilling frost, or the scorching heat—it will still take root; you will have the satisfaction to see it bud, blossom, and bring forth fruit, a large increase.—That single plant—a resolution to lead a new life, cherished and fostered by a frequent participation of the holy communion, will become a nursery for all the other duties of Religion.

There is a third excuse for not frequenting the Sacrament often urged by men of a very different complexion, by men who lead honest, moral lives, regularly attend the Church, and are not very remiss in other religious Duties—which is—that an unworthy receiving will expose them to eternal damnation. The original word signifies only judgment or condemnation, and in this place, in a temporal sense—and so it ought to be rendered. It was first made use of to deter the people of Corinth from

the excess which, at the celebration of this holy Feast, they usually run into.—But were the danger ever so great, the consequences ever so dreadful—we are expressly commanded by its divine Author to "do this in remem- "brance of Him." Let not then a false tenderness of conscience prevent any one from commemorating the Love of his great Redeemer.—The Saviour of the world never could enjoin what, in its nature, or its consequences, would render us liable to that wrath, from which to redeem us, He vouchsafed to die.

The last excuse I shall mention, which is indeed the parent of every other, is, that should men relapse into sin, after having communicated, instead of expiating, they are aggravating their guilt.—This excuse will vanish whenever you frequent the Lord's-Table with a suitable disposition. Know once what it is to receive the Sacrament with "a lively faith in Christ, a thankful "remembrance of his death & in perfect charity with all "men"—and "the Commandments will appear no "longer grievous—the yoke of Christ will insensibly be- "come easy, and the burthen of Religion imperceptibly

, they grow light."—Compare for a moment, a course of
great ichedness & vice—a heart you are afraid to look into—
com= dread of God's avenging wrath with a life uniformly
nem= gulated by the Maxims of the Gospel—"a conscience void
ess of of offence"—and an humble assurance of eternal felicity
the—and you will not absent yourselves from the Lord's=Table
world rough an apprehension of thereby multiplying your
nces, ns.—The Communion being the most solemn part of the
o re= hristian Religion, the design of a frequent participation
f it is to invigorate our souls, and secure them from
deed e most insidious attempts of temptation.

lapse Having shewed the nature and design of the in=
iat= stitution of the Sacrament of the Lord's=Supper—the ob=
will gations every Christian is under to a frequent particis
h a ation of it, and removed the excuses some men make for
the their neglect, in order that what is delivered may awaken
ful the Thoughtless, alarm the Impenitent, encourage the
all Desponding, confirm the Believer—the design of all
no discourses from this place—being solely the Salvation, not
be= the Entertainment, of those who hear them—I will pre=
bly me a little longer on your patience—whilst I earnestly

exhort you "all with one consent"—to celebrate the Death of your Redeemer at his holy Table.

It is a no less melancholy, than just observation that many men spend their whole lives without once making the expected return of gratitude to God for his superabundant kindness, without once presenting themselves at his Table; tho' "they are bid in the name of "God, tho' they are called in Christ's behalf—tho' they "are exhorted as they love their own Salvation"—tho' God-Almighty himself in the person of our Redeemer has commanded it—they live as if they were without Churches, without Ministers, without Sacraments, and "all with "one consent begin to make excuse." Excuse! from what? Why—from commemorating their Redemption from sin—from commemorating their Redemption from what the Scripture, in the most awful and emphatic language Inspiration ever dictated, stiles "the Damnation of "Hell."—To such—if such there be here, I am now to address myself. You will consider that though you are called Christians, you have no right to the name—it is a title that does not belong to you. But as you

Death ive in a Christian country, and are therefore bound, as
e Citizens of a Christian State, to conform to the laws
ation f the religious compact—be persuaded to ask yourselves
onc his natural yet important question—'Is it not my in=
r his tention before I leave this world—before I am sum=
them moned by my Almighty Creator to the regions of
me o death and the abyss of Eternity—to receive the holy Sa=
they crament? And your own reason will answer, 'In
—tho such a situation, when you are oppressed with sickness,
r has distracted with pain, stung with guilt, agonized with
rches death—the Sacrament can have no efficacy—convey no
with blessing—since not gratitude and duty—but dread and
hat? terror make you desirous of receiving it.—If the Chris=
n sfintian Religion afford succour in our distress, comfort in
t the our troubles, satisfaction to our desires—these Consolations
uage are assuredly to be found in a worthy observance of this its
n o distinguishing Ordinance.—Plead, therefore, in the cele=
non bration of the Lord's=Supper—you, of all men, have the
you greatest occasion—for the pardon of your sins—the accept=
ne— ance of your persons, the sanctification of your hearts—
you he Salvation of your souls.—The young & old—the ma=

ster & the servant—the rich & poor—the learned & the ig-
ignorant are in this alike concerned. Let us, then, all re-
ananimously, "with one consent"—like the grateful chil-u-
dren of an indulgent parent—or, like "the snow and he
"hail which fulfil his word" do what He enjoins, and p-
let us, in this act of our obedience, "shew the Lord t-
"Death till He come"—till He come the second time u-
to judgment.—It is not in the power of Genius or with-t-
in the sphere of Learning to invent an excuse that will n-
stand the test of examination. Let me, if ye fear God—f-
if you value your souls, and nothing deserves valuing in-t-
comparison with them—let me, for God's sake, for the-
sake of your souls, let me prevail with you.—What sight
can there be so awfully pleasing, as an entire Congrega-
tion—the highest and the lowest—the wealthy master—
the dependent servant—the needy labourer—confessing at
the Altar of God their joint dependance upon Him, &
praising Him "for his inestimable Love in the Redemp-
"tion of the world"? This we believe to constitute the hap-
piness of Heaven—Let us exhibit the resemblance of a
heavenly society on earth.—To use the symbolical Lan-

& the age of Scripture—"Come—for all things will be
n, already."—It is your Saviour, your God, who gives
l chil- the invitation. "Oh! come then to the gates of
v an- his Altar with thanksgiving, and into his courts with
, an- praise—pay your vows"—your vows of obedience—"in
Lord" the presence of all his people," left He be wroth with
time- and give you up a prey to the error of your ways &
with the vices of your hearts.—"But if ye seek him He
t will will be found of you".—"Oh! consider this, ye that
God— forget God," ye, who seldom or never appear at the
ng in- Altar—"left He pluck you away and there be none to
r the deliver you."
fight
vega-
er—
g at
n, &
emp-
hap-
of a
lan-

Theophs. J. St. John.

Entered at Stationer's Hall.